

Washington State Patrol Media Release

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Don't depend on dumb luck
this St. Patrick's Day.

Friends
Don't Let
Friends
Drive Drunk.
Designate a Sober Driver.

Friends Don't Let Friends Drive Drunk This St. Patrick's Day

Don't Depend on Dumb Luck—Designate a Sober Driver Before the Party Begins

Troopers in District Eight of the Washington State Patrol will be out in full force looking for and removing impaired drivers. Troopers have made it a priority to remove unsafe, dangerous intoxicated drivers this holiday weekend.

Troopers in District Eight will participate in 3 emphasis patrols. Troopers assigned to the Poulsbo and Port Angeles Detachments will participate in the DUI Task Force emphasis patrols. Port Angeles Detachment will have three additional troopers working on overtime. Troopers assigned to the Hoquiam Detachment will conduct a DUI emphasis patrol along state highways in and around Aberdeen and Hoquiam. Captain Mark Thomas, Commander of District Eight said, "Troopers will make it a priority to remove intoxicated and unsafe drivers from the roadway this holiday weekend. It is my hope drivers be socially responsible and make safe choices before getting behind the wheel and endangering a life."

Nationally, in 2004, 48 percent of all traffic fatalities that occurred during the evening of St. Patrick's Day, and into the early hours of the following morning, involved drivers with blood alcohol concentrations (BAC) of .01 and higher. Of those fatalities, a vast majority were crashes involving a driver whose BAC was .08 or higher – the illegal limit in Washington State. This year, the risk may be even higher since St. Patrick's Day will be celebrated on a Friday night.

District Eight

Clallam*Jefferson*Kitsap*Mason*Grays Harbor*Pacific*Wahkiakum

District Eight of the Washington State Patrol will be joining forces with law enforcement officials across the nation to remind all who plan on using alcohol during St. Patrick's Day festivities this year, to act responsibly by designating their sober drivers before the parties begin.

St. Patrick's Day has become a big night out for many Americans—particularly among young adults. It has also become a dangerous night on our roadways due to impaired drivers. Since St. Patrick's Day falls on Friday this year, we are working hard to remind everyone that *Friends Don't Let Friends Drive Drunk*. Whether you are meeting a few friends at the local pub after work or attending a party, if you plan on using alcohol, never drive while impaired—and never let your friends drive if you think they are impaired.”

Designating a sober driver and not letting friends drive while impaired are just two of several simple steps to help avoid a tragic crash or an arrest for impaired driving. Other important tips include:

- If you're impaired, call a taxi or call a sober friend or family member to get you home safely;
- Report impaired drivers to law enforcement;
- Always buckle up—it's still your best defense against an impaired driver.

Impaired driving is one of America's deadliest problems. Overall in 2004, over 15,000 people died in highway crashes involving a driver or motorcycle operator with a BAC of .01 or higher. Of those, nearly 13,000 were in crashes where the BAC was .08 or higher.

“Driving impaired or riding with someone who is impaired is simply not worth the risk,” said Captain Mark Thomas, “Not only do you risk killing yourself or someone else, but the trauma and financial costs of a crash or an arrest for driving while impaired can be significant.”

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